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I. — *The Character of the Latin Accent*

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FOR a long time scholars have been aware of an apparent conflict between two parts of the evidence on the nature of the Latin accent. Certain vowel changes unmistakably indicate a stress accent. The familiar weakening of vowels in other than initial syllables (*recipio* beside *cipio*, *receptus* beside *captus*, *distineo* beside *teneo*, etc.) is valid evidence for a prehistoric stress accent on the initial syllable of the word. Syncope of short vowels, as in *fac* beside *cape*, *infra* beside *inferus*, etc., is also evidence for a prehistoric stress accent resting on initial syllables. A few cases of weakening and syncope seem to be due to the historic accent on penult or antepenult, indicating that this also was a stress accent. Of much greater importance is the 'iambic shortening' of long vowels and syllables; for this is clearly due to the historic accent, which must therefore have been a stress accent.

The Romans themselves, on the other hand, have left us several careful descriptions of their accent and a great number of more or less casual remarks about it. Up to the close of the fourth century A.D. they consistently and unmistakably describe the accent as one of pitch. Furthermore the strict observance of quantity in Latin verse and the conflict of ictus and accent have seemed to many scholars cogent evidence of a pitch rather than a stress accent.

Some years ago Professor Abbott (*Class. Phil.* II, 444-460) suggested that the apparently conflicting evidence might be harmonized on the assumption that the stress accent of early Latin gave way to a pitch accent in the formal Latin of the classical period, while stress continued to characterize the popular speech. In speaking about their language, the Romans usually refer to formal Latin, while the linguistic phenomena indicating a stress accent, Professor Abbott thought, were "characteristic of, if not peculiar to, popular Latin." The strict observance of quantity, furthermore, he regarded as peculiar to literature and therefore as evidence for the accent of formal Latin.

An additional point in favor of the theory was that it explained away the troublesome conflict of accent and ictus in classical poetry; if accent was merely pitch the field was free for a stressed ictus coinciding with the time-beats. In other words, Latin poetry would have no more conflict than Greek between accent and ictus.

In *T.A.P.A.* XLII, 45-52, I proposed another way of harmonizing the two classes of evidence, on the ground that Latin had an accent which combined a considerable variation of pitch with a considerable variation of stress. This suggestion has been repeated in my *Pronunciation of Greek and Latin*, 206-218. I come back to the matter now chiefly for two reasons. I desire to show the bearing upon this question of some investigations of mine, and, in the second place, the recent adherence to Professor Abbott's theory of a leading American student of Latin pronunciation (Professor Kent, *T.A.P.A.* LI, 19-29) brings the matter again into prominence.

The evidence on which the theory is based appears to me altogether illusory. Syncope was chiefly due to the prehistoric accent, and so, for the most part, antedated the division between formal and popular Latin. We must suppose that both full and syncopated forms were in use in early times, and that popular Latin generally preserved the syncopated forms and formal Latin more frequently the full forms. The

distinction is by no means sharp, as is shown by *puertiae* in Horace, *balneum* in Cicero and Horace, *caldus*, which Octavian recommended to his grandson on the ground that *calidus* was "*otiosus*," and many other syncopated forms in good use. But it is not worth while to press the point, since the syncope of these words, being of prehistoric origin, has no bearing whatever on the accent of classical Latin.

Of greater significance is the fact that at least one word syncopated by the historic accent belonged to approved colloquial speech. Quintilian says (I, 6, 21): *Multum enim literatus qui . . . calefacere dixerit potius quam quod dicimus*. Since *calēfacere* could not suffer syncope until shortened by the iambic law, this seems to indicate that the historic stress accent and its effects were not foreign to the familiar speech of educated persons.

In this connection I would cite an interesting passage from Cicero, *de Or.* III, 12, 45: *Equidem cum audio socrum meam Laeliam — facilius enim mulieres incorruptam antiquitatem conservant, quod multorum sermonis expertes ea tenent semper quae prima didicerunt — sed eam sic audio ut Plautum mihi aut Naevium videar audire*.

Since accent is the very soul of speech, we may be sure that in Cicero's opinion aristocratic ladies used the same sort of accent as was proper in reading Plautus and Terence. Now, if Professor Abbott's theory were correct, Cicero would have known well enough that both language and verse of Plautus and Terence demanded the stress accent; both the syncope which abounds in those authors and the nearly constant harmony of accent and ictus would have called for the accent of popular Latin rather than of formal Latin, in the opinion of Cicero and his contemporaries.

These two scraps of evidence seem to show that the *sermo cotidianus* of the upper classes had a stress accent. Shall we, then, suppose that Vergil ordinarily spoke with a stress accent, but discarded it for pitch when he composed hexameters? Did Cicero use a stress accent in dictating his letters and

philosophical works, which are in the *sermo cotidianus*, but employ a pitch accent when he addressed the people — who, by hypothesis, always spoke with a stress accent?

Conversely, the strict observance of quantity cannot be confined to formal literature. That popular Latin preserved clear-cut distinctions of quantity after the introduction of the historic accent on penult and antepenult, is shown by the verse of Plautus and Terence. The prosody of the early dramatists is in some respects different from that of Vergil, but it is scarcely less rigorous, except in the matter of iambic shortening; and this process is so narrowly limited that it should not be thought of as a relaxation of the laws of quantity but rather as a modification of them.

Popular speech preserved the accurate distinction of quantity in accented syllables to a much later date, and when such distinctions finally broke down, the qualitative differences which had accompanied them remained. Hence the Romance languages show different developments of long and short accented vowels (e.g., Ital. *miele* from *mēl* but *vero* from *vērūm*). Furthermore, quantity persisted in certain unaccented penultimate vowels until the late Vulgar Latin shift of accent to these vowels. Hence Ital. *moglie* correctly records the quantity of *e* in the penult of *mulierem*. It appears, then, that popular Latin was in accord with Latin verse in its strict observance of quantity; if quantity furnishes evidence of pitch in one it does so in both.

Professor Abbott's theory requires the assumption that the pitch accent of Indo-European became a stress accent in Italic and remained such in Latin until about the beginning of the literature, or a little later. Then stress gave way to pitch in formal Latin for five or six hundred years, and finally regained its predominance by 400 A.D. Such an oscillation is possible, of course; but one wants pretty strong evidence before accepting it as a fact.

In particular, some explanation is needed of the relapse of formal Latin from stress to pitch accent, while popular

Latin retained its stress. The explanation is found, Professor Abbott thinks, in the influence of Greek upon Latin literature. This idea is rather prominent both in Professor Abbott's and in Professor Kent's discussion, and it seems worth while to refute it in some detail.

The persistence of one's native accent in one's pronunciation of a foreign language is familiar enough. In fact it has been suggested that some of the historic changes of accent were brought about in this way. Possibly the Indo-European pitch accent gave way to the stress of Celtic, Germanic, and Italic when Indo-European speech was adopted by great numbers of westerners whose native languages had heavy stress. That is to say, the primitive language of Italy, for example, may have had a stress accent, and this may be the reason why, when they learned Indo-European, the Italic peoples spoke it with a stress accent.

In the present instance we are asked to believe that the reverse of this has taken place, that educated Romans imported into their pronunciation of their own language the accent of a foreign language. It would be difficult to find a parallel for such a development. Just how improbable the theory is will appear from a moment's reflection.

We in America frequently hear English pronounced more or less in the manner of German, French, Slavic, Japanese, and so on. Particularly in point is the occasional sing-song of Chinese or Swedish English. Just so the Greek pronunciation of Latin was familiar in Rome on the lips of Greek artisans and slaves, and of the disreputable mob to whom Juvenal applied the epithet *Graeculus esuriens*. The use of Greek expletives and slang in Plautus and Terence (*eu, euge, Hercle, dica* 'lawsuit,' *πάλιν Trin.* 705, *badisso* 'go' *Asin.* 706) is clearly a reflection of familiar usage in the polyglot capital. Sometimes the absurdity that always attaches to such foreign tags is quite evident; as where Stasimus, *Trin.* 419, says *argentum οἷχεται*, or where Ergasilus, *Capt.* 881 ff., swears *ναὶ τὰν Κόραν* and continues with *ναὶ τὰν Πραινέστην, ναὶ τὰν*

Συγγλῶν, etc. In the latter passage the non-Attic τάν of course follows the pronunciation of a very large proportion of the Greeks in Rome. Quintilian tells (I, 4, 14) how Cicero once made fun of a Greek witness who could not pronounce Latin *f*. Petronius satirizes the mispronunciation of Latin by Greek freedmen and slaves, and in two passages (59 and 68) he seems to refer to the use of the Greek musical accent in reciting Latin.¹ The second passage is particularly significant for us, since it concerns the recitation of Vergil with pitch accent. The italicized words are the ones that suggest sing-song: Servus qui ad pedes Habinnæ . . . sedebat proclamavit subito *canora voce*:

Interea medium Aeneas iam classe tenebat.

Nullus sonus umquam *acidior* percussit aures meas; nam praeter *errantis barbariae* aut *adiectum* aut *deminutum clamorem* miscebat Atellanicos versus, ut tunc primum me etiam Vergilius offenderit.

We are asked to believe that this absurd foreign pronunciation of Latin was adopted for use in serious literature! As well suppose that British or American enthusiasts over French literature would say 'zees peen' for 'this pin' or would use 'he' and 'she' in place of 'it'! Language mixture is common, but this particular kind of language mixture rarely occurs and probably never spreads beyond a few erratic and foolish speakers. In particular, we cannot suppose that the writer of a Roman national epic would make use of an accent which was familiar to all Romans as a mark of the most numerous and therefore the most despised group of foreigners in the Subura.

Ennius' efforts to create an epic dialect for Latin furnish no parallel for the assumed adoption of the Greek accent. Ennius tried to imitate certain features of Homeric Greek, which were as unfamiliar on the streets of Athens as of Rome.

¹ See Frank, *Class. Quart.* IV (1910), 35. His argument now seems to me more convincing than when I referred to it in *T.A.P.A.* XLII, 49.

The Greek words he borrowed are words of a literary flavor, quite different from the Greek oaths and everyday expressions which Plautus and Terence got direct from the Greek inhabitants of Rome. The 'tmesis' of the famous *saxo cere-comminuit-brum* was intended to imitate Homeric 'tmesis,' and this was as different from spoken Greek as from spoken Latin in Ennius' day. When Ennius borrowed a Greek termination, it was the epic *-oio* (Mettioeo Fufettioeo). The whole aim of Ennius and his successors was to get away from familiar speech, and the adoption of certain features of Greek literature helped in this; but the effect of using the Greek pitch accent would have been quite the reverse.

The normal Roman attitude toward foreign speech appears in Cicero, *de Oratore*, III, 44: Quare cum sit quaedam certa vox Romani generis urbisque propria, in qua nihil offendi, nihil displicere, nihil animadverti possit, nihil sonare aut olere peregrinum, hanc sequamur neque solum rusticam asperitatem sed etiam peregrinam insolentiam fugere discamus.

The theory of a different accent for popular and for formal Latin raises also a troublesome question of date. If we are to be saved the difficulty of a clash between ictus and accent in the Latin hexameter, we must suppose that the pitch accent was introduced into formal Latin at least as early as the time of Ennius; for his hexameters are not essentially different in this respect from those of Vergil (see *Class. Phil.* XIV, 234-285). Professor Abbott (pp. 452, 455) seems, as a matter of fact, to include Ennius' Latin in that which was subject to the pitch accent. It is peculiarly difficult to believe, however, that a predominantly pitch accent could have developed so early. It is quite impossible that Hellenic influence could have modified the language to any great extent by that time. Even educated Romans were still content to make *p*, *t*, and *c* out of Greek *φ*, *θ*, and *χ*, while *υ* was regularly represented by Latin *u*, and *ζ* by Latin *s* or *ss*. At any rate Horace's "*Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit*" cannot be applied to the period; for Greece was not yet captured!

Almost equally difficult is the supposition that pitch took the place of stress at this early date, by spontaneous development, in one type of the Latin language but not in others. Before Ennius there was scarcely a distinction between formal and popular Latin. There were no doubt some differences of vocabulary dependent upon the audience and the occasion, while some few words may have been confined to the upper classes and certain others to the poorest and meanest citizens. But there was no sharp cleft in the language such as would make a divergent development in accent understandable.

Professor Kent, on the other hand, places the development of the pitch accent about 100 B.C., by which time Hellenic influence was about as strong as it ever became. One wonders how he would account for the clash of accent and ictus in Ennius.

Clearly there are some serious objections to be urged against the theory of a different accent for formal and for popular Latin. If the facts it was intended to explain can be otherwise satisfactorily accounted for, it will fall of its own weight. They can, I think, be accounted for in the way mentioned above. The Romans themselves tell us that their accent was one of pitch, and certain linguistic changes of Latin clearly indicate a stress accent. There is no difficulty in assuming that both kinds of evidence apply to the same accent, which was at once a pitch accent and a stress accent. Most accents combine these two elements, and, if we suppose that the Latin accent combined them in nearly equal proportions, all the requirements of our problem are fully met.

Positive proof that the accent of formal Latin contained a considerable element of stress comes from a study of the differences in technique between Greek and Latin hexameters. It appears that when the Roman poets departed from the practice of their Greek models they did so to accommodate the Greek measures to the Latin accent. My demonstra-

tion (*C.P.* XIV, 234-244) that this was the case with Plautus and Terence need not be reviewed, because their accent is not here under discussion.

It has long been recognized that Latin hexameters differ markedly from Greek hexameters in two respects. In Greek there is no observable relationship between accent and ictus, while in Latin there is usually conflict of accent and ictus in the first four feet of the verse and harmony in the last two. In the second place, there are some striking differences in the position of word-ends and sense-pauses — the phenomena which have usually been vaguely grouped under the term 'caesura.' I have shown (*Class. Phil.* XIV, 373-385, *A.J.P.* XLII, 289-308) that the clash of accent and ictus in the first four feet and the harmony in the last two feet were not accidental, but were sought after by the poets, and that this effort to secure a certain relationship of accent and ictus led to the observed changes in the position of word-ends and sense-pauses.

The argument is briefly this: —

1. There are certain words which can be used in hexameters only with clash of accent and ictus (*e.g.*, *ferunt*), and certain others which can be used only with harmony of accent and ictus (*e.g.*, *mittere*). Now words of these two types form respectively 19.59% and 18.29% of the ordinary prose vocabulary. In the first four feet of the hexameter words requiring clash form about 26.63% of all words employed and those requiring harmony form only about 9.22%. In the last two feet, on the contrary, words requiring clash form only about 2.52% of all words employed and those requiring harmony comprise nearly half of the entire vocabulary, namely 45.60%.

2. Words consisting wholly of long syllables may be employed either with clash or with harmony of accent and ictus. Such words occur in both parts of the verse more frequently than in prose, and especially in the last two feet. With very few exceptions these words, if employed in the last two feet, are so placed as to produce harmony. For the first part of

the verse the evidence for manipulation is not quite so clear. Words of the rhythmic type — \cup have the ictus on the penult, on the average, only a little more than half as often as syllable groups of the same rhythm, and we must therefore assume that the poets constructed this part of the verse so as to avoid harmony of accent and ictus on spondaic words. A similar tendency is not observable in regard to longer words consisting wholly of long syllables, but of course the longer words are very much less common.

3. The chief differences between the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* in the position of word-ends are these. In the *Aeneid* word-ends are much rarer than in the *Iliad* after the first short syllable of the first and third feet and after the first syllable of the fifth foot, while they are much more frequent after the first syllable of the third and fourth feet and at the close of the fifth foot. All of these remarkable variations may be fully explained by the attempt to secure clash of accent and ictus in the first four feet and harmony of accent and ictus in the last two feet; for a word-end after the first syllable of a foot involves ictus on the ultima, while a word-end after the first short syllable or at the end of the foot ordinarily throws the ictus upon accented penult or antepenult.

4. Similarly the Latin hexameter shows a distribution of sense-pauses very different from that of the Greek hexameter. Certain sense-pauses are favored and certain others are avoided in such a way as to produce clash in the first four feet and harmony in the last two. Furthermore Greek hexameters show a clear technique of sense-pauses, and this is largely neglected by the Roman poets, probably because the Latin hexameter, with its required attention to accent, was so much more difficult to compose than the Greek that the rigors of technique had to be relaxed at some points.

Now, the Roman poets would not have gone to such great pains to correlate accent and ictus — and that in violation of Greek precedent — if accent and ictus had not had enough similarity to demand such treatment. Ictus can scarcely

have been a matter of pitch, since the Greek pitch accent had no effect upon it. It has been held that Latin verse was merely a regular succession of long and short syllables, and that the mere quantitative predominance of one part of the foot set it off from the other part. To paraphrase for our present purpose, ictus has been identified with regularly recurring long quantity. But the Latin accent was not confined to long syllables. In fact we can find no possible common element for accent and ictus save stress. Therefore both accent and ictus must have involved stress.

This demonstration goes beyond the thesis, and touches upon another disputed point, namely, the nature of the ictus. There is a considerable amount of evidence on this question, and, in my opinion, it all harmonizes with the bit here presented. I hope to discuss the ictus of classical verse in the near future. At that time I shall have to explain the apparent anomaly of intentional clash of accent and ictus in the first four feet of the hexameter. For the present I merely refer to the articles, mentioned above, from which the last eight paragraphs have, in the main, been abridged.